



Standards Activities Overview

The ANSI Federation's primary goal is to enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. business and the American quality of life by promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and ensuring their integrity.

The Institute, which is active in both national and international standardization, recently worked with representatives from the public- and private-sectors to develop a National Standards Strategy (NSS) for the United States. This document establishes a framework that can be used by all interests including companies, government, nongovernmental organizations, standards developers and consumers, to further improve U.S. competitiveness abroad while continuing to provide strong support for domestic markets. Using the NSS as a guide, ANSI is successfully facing the standardization challenges of a global economy while addressing key quality-of-life issues such as safety and the environment.

Although ANSI itself does not develop American National Standards (ANSs), it provides all interested U.S. parties with a neutral venue to come together and work towards common agreements. The process to create these voluntary standards is guided by the Institute's cardinal principles of consensus, due process and openness and depends heavily upon data gathering and compromises among a diverse range of stakeholders. The Institute ensures that access to the standards process, including an appeals mechanism, is made available to anyone directly or materially affected by a standard that is under development. Thousands of individuals, companies, government agencies and other organizations such as labor, industrial and consumer groups voluntarily contribute their knowledge, talents and efforts to standards development.

In addition to facilitating the formation of standards in the U.S., ANSI promotes the use of U. S. standards internationally, advocates U.S. policy and technical positions in international and regional standards organizations and encourages the adoption of international standards as national standards where these meet the needs of the user community.

International Standardization

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The Institute is the sole U.S. representative and dues-paying member of the two major non-treaty international standards organizations, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and, via the U.S. National Committee (USNC), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). As a founding member of the ISO, ANSI plays a

strong leadership role in its governing body while U.S. participation, via USNC, is equally strong in the IEC.

Through ANSI, the U.S. has immediate access to the ISO and IEC standards development processes. ANSI participates in almost the entire technical program of both the ISO and the IEC, and administers many key committees and subgroups. Part of its responsibilities as the U.S. member body to the ISO include accrediting U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (U.S. TAGs), whose primary purpose is to develop and transmit, via ANSI, U.S. positions on activities and ballots of the international technical and are endorsed and closely monitored by the USNC Technical Management Committee (TMC).

In many instances, U.S. standards are taken forward to ISO and IEC, through ANSI or USNC, where they are adopted in whole or in part as international standards. For this reason, ANSI plays an important part in creating international standards that support the worldwide sale of products, which prevent regions from using local standards to favor local industries. Since volunteers from industry and government, not ANSI staff, carry out the work of the international technical committees, the success of these efforts often is dependent upon the willingness of U.S. industry and government to commit the resources required to ensure strong U.S. technical participation in the international standards process.

National Standardization

ANSI currently provides a forum for over 270 ANSI-accredited standards developers representing approximately 200 distinct organizations in the private and public sectors. These groups work cooperatively to develop voluntary national consensus standards and American National Standards (ANS). In 2002, there were approximately 10,000 such documents.

In order to maintain ANSI accreditation, standards developers are required to consistently adhere to a set of requirements or procedures known as the "[*ANSI Procedures for the Development and Coordination of American National Standards*](#)," that govern the consensus development process. Due process is the key to ensuring that ANSs are developed in an environment that is equitable, accessible and responsive to the requirements of various stakeholders. The open and fair ANS process ensures that all interested and affected parties have an opportunity to participate in a standard's development. It also serves and protects the public interest since standards developer accredited by ANSI must meet the Institute's requirements for openness, balance, consensus and other due process safeguards. In 2003-2004, the *ANSI Essential Requirements* will replace the *ANSI Procedures*.

The hallmarks of the American National Standards process include:

- consensus on a proposed standard by a group or “consensus body” that includes representatives from materially affected and interested parties;
- broad-based public review and comment on draft standards;
- consideration of and response to comments submitted by voting members of the relevant consensus body and by public review commenters;
- incorporation of approved changes into a draft standard; and
- right to appeal by any participant that believes that due process principles were not sufficiently respected during the standards development in accordance with the ANSI-accredited procedures of the standards developer.

The ANSI process serves all standardization efforts in the United States by providing and promoting a process that withstands scrutiny, while protecting the rights and interests of every participant. In essence, ANSI standards quicken the market acceptance of products while making clear how to improve the safety of those products for the protection of consumers.

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